Centennial Science and Engineering Library Planning focus groups for an e-Science Mall

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Summary of CSEL Focus Groups     March 9, 10, and 11, 2009

Three groups of approximately ten students each were assembled to help re-envision the southwest wing in the Centennial Science and Engineering Library (CSEL). The process used was an “affinity focus group exercise” that helps identify desired services, accommodations, furnishings, technology, etc., in renovated Library spaces. The students were both graduate and undergraduates, mostly from the science and engineering departments, but also from architecture and planning and the humanities.

Several ideas emerged. First, the students are interested in a space that brings together all the digital tools they use in their studies. They want places where they can use multimedia computers to create projects as well as rehearse presentations. They are interested in computers that have all the software they need available. This includes collaborative and flexible areas that can be configured for different groups.

Second, the current library is perceived as a “dismal” and “dated” place that needs to be made stylish and inviting. There were many ideas for new furniture, better lighting, and recreational areas that would help make it a lively destination.

Third, there were a number of ideas for hosting academic services and interdisciplinary programs in the library which serves as a central and neutral space. This included statistics clinics, thesis advisement, digitization center, software demonstrations, and more.

Finally, there is a real interest in sustainability and green issues. It seemed to make sense that a science and engineering library should be a showcase for energy efficiency and green materials in construction and furnishings.

These focus groups provided clear evidence that there is interest in using the library space in new ways and in making it a more dynamic place. The redesign should create separate spaces that enable different uses; see the attached transcripts.
CSEL Focus Group      March 9, 2009

Attendants: 12 participants

Affinity Groupings

“Green Space” – Stylish flexible lounge space that is sustainable and eco-friendly
- Separated meeting room
- Some sound isolation
- More white boards with markers
- Leisure room
- Gaming zone
- Future zone
- Colorful paint
- Art
- Comfortable, movable, updated furniture
- More lights at the table level
- Flexible personal space for study

“Future Zone” – High tech area for students
- Modeling computers
- More computers
- Access to whole bunch of computer software
- Multi-media software, projects, screen, remote connections, laptops
- Software (matlab, mathematica, maple, spice, etc.)
- Nintendo/Wii
- Free printing
- Outlets
- Sound booth for podcasts
- Area for science and technology workshops
- Touch screen computers
- Digital studio that has equipment to record lectures
- Ability to record paper and thesis presentations
“Four corners” – 4 different areas with different activities (recreation corner, digital corner, study corner, and lounge corner)

Recreation Corner

Exercise equipment
Ping pong

Digital Corner

Digital recording areas
Media Center/store
Printers – free for students
Band practice recording room
CD/DVD’s of lectures
Departmental software and lectures

Study Corner

Study rooms that are private and divided
Study room for projects
Meeting rooms with projectors and multimedia computers

Lounge Corner

Couches
Open furniture
Microwave and refrigerator

“Jolt, Revive, Refresh” – Activities to help students recharge

Couches
Casual places
Corner store, juice bar (not Starbucks!)
Healthy food and snacks
More water fountains, filtered water
CSEL Focus Group    March 10, 2009

Attendants: 8 participants

Affinity Groupings

“Digital Education Media” – All the equipment you need for your education

More student computer
Large monitors
Mac stations
Flat screen interactive media stations
Media studio
Multimedia stations (audio/video)
DVD library, television room
Digital music library
Anatomical model room with Adam program on a computer

“Looks and Feels” - Attractive and inviting space

Proper utilization of space, use architect
Reptile wall
Fish tanks
Plants
Lounge room
Medium height movable walls
Couches
Colors and mirrors
Stylish
Good lighting
Organized on Feng Shui principles
Ipod accessory vending machine
Comments box
Group study rooms
Display of student work
Art display cases
Sustainable education space
Recreation room with Wii and video games
Drawing room
Reception area with kitchenette
Reconfigure carrels on outside walls
“Kinetic Konections” - Connect people to other people through educational spaces

- Collapsible/mobile performance space
- Sound proof recording booth
- Video conferencing station
- Meditation room
- Tread mills, cycling machines to make you stay awake
- Walking track around outside walls
- Climbing wall at outside wall/window area
- Small instruction group area
Attendants: 8 participants

Affinity Groupings

“The Academic Spa” - Customizable space for students to do all the activities that help them succeed

Academic advising station
Thesis and dissertation advising
Paper editing station
Interdisciplinary displays and shop fronts
Statistics clinic
Digitization Innovation park
Music stations with headphones and playlists
Big LCD – video display
Team computing circle, networked computers with headsets for team competitive work and gaming
Small storage room for group projects
Mobile charging station

“Aesthetics/Ambiance” - Change the aesthetics and improve the ambiance

Bringing inside and outside environments together
Different areas created by different textures and lighting, etc
Be able to see the whole but different activities in different areas
Break rooms shouldn’t be isolated but shouldn’t disturb others
Microwave, eating
Change the perception of what people think of CSEL
Create reasons for non-science and engineering students to come
Save energy
Natural light, tubes of light or skylights
Mini arboretum
Less institutional yet functional furniture
Pit sitting area
Glass sliding doors for carrels
Group study rooms
Get rid of icky chairs
Varied lamps
Multi-task area that is sound proof for talking on Skype, snacking etc
White noise units in study rooms
Digital light displays with different scenes
“Chill Lounge”- Area where you can recharge from your studies

Break room with microwave, coffee maker, snack machines, tables and chairs
Cafeteria with lounge area with table lighting and comfortable chairs, newspapers and magazines
Area to freely socialize – an ice cream sundae station or hot chocolate
Comfortable non-study areas with tv and food
Science museum with information regarding greatest scientists, their inventions and a small touch screen computer to explain their theories